
Ecological Adversity and Social Agitation in Selected Dystopian Novels: A Postmodern perspective

Dr. Subodh Kumar Ray

School Teacher (PGT) ,U.H.S Shahbajpur, Darbhanga Sadar, Darbhanga

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The present research paper aims to study some dystopian novels as a mirror of social agitation, ecological adversity and post modernism. A dystopian or anti-utopian society is one that is marked by oppression or poverty. The necessity for ecological consciousness and the prevalence of ecological problems in society are reflected in dystopian fiction. The darkest aspects of human nature and the human mind are revealed in dystopian novels such as George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty Four, Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, and Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go. The severe environmental problems depicted in dystopian literature include rising global temperatures, the perils of excessive technology use, the damaging effects of radiation, pollution, shortages of food and water, a lack of organic agriculture, overpopulation, wildlife extinction, deforestation, and many other problems that could have a significant impact on the lives of both humans and the natural world. Numerous ideas and philosophies emerged, such as eco-criticism, to highlight the coexistence and connection between nature and humans. In addition to alerting people to current ecological problems, dystopian fiction also highlights the grave risks associated with excessive use of technologies like as bioengineering and nanotechnology, which may endanger civilization and peaceful coexistence. Overuse of technology and scientific advancements cause social unrest and ecological hardship for people's lives and the lives of future generations. By depicting the threats and obstacles that could arise in the near future as a result of human carelessness toward the environment and ecological well-being, dystopian fiction also helps readers become more aware of and conscientious of environmental issues. Dystopian fiction in the postmodern era offers alternative narratives that challenge and undermine the prevailing discourses of power and control. It also offers a sophisticated knowledge of the intricate relationship between the state and the person in the dystopian society. Utilize postmodernism theory to better understand the themes and literary methods that underlie dystopian novels.

Keywords: Environmental Problem, Postmodernism, Oppression, Eco-criticism, Ecological consciousness

Introduction:-

Dystopian fiction is set in hypothetical or near-future nations whose social systems and daily life are in a condition of catastrophic collapse. Dystopian fiction exposes the darkest aspects of human nature and the human psyche. Dystopian fiction imagines the worst-case scenarios and is set in harsh, dehumanizing environments. Dystopian fiction instills a sense of urgency about current events because it is typically set in the near future rather than the long future. If existential threats like authoritarianism, nuclear war, climate change, and overpopulation are not addressed, this genre of fiction speculates on what will happen to civilization in the future. Additionally, dystopian fiction serves as a metaphor, warning that things may go wrong if people don't alter their behavior toward the environment, society, and ecology. Environmental damage, economic suffering, loss of identity or personal autonomy, political intervention, survival, and technology are some of the characteristics found in dystopian books. Dystopian fiction also draws attention to the flaws in modern society, its people, and its government. There is also hope for a better future if people unite and strive for the overall enhancement of ecology, society, and the environment.

Literature and nature are inextricably linked, and this can be observed in many different ways in the works of poets and novelists from many different civilizations. "Eco-criticism" refers to the multidisciplinary study of literature and environmental consciousness. Eco-criticism was a new literary theory that arose in the final decades of the twentieth century to reevaluate how humans relate to the natural world. Ecology is the human network of relationships and plays an important role in society. The use of ecology and ecological themes to literary analysis is known as eco-criticism.

Simply put, eco criticism is the study of the interaction between literature and the natural world, according to its founder, Cheryll Glotfelt. Eco-criticism examines the presentation and analysis of environmental issues, cultural issues related to the environment, and attitudes toward nature. Because of growing technology and a societal emphasis on environmental degradation, this type of criticism has received a lot of attention lately. The concept of "Eco-criticism" has been expanded and integrated with various social and humanitarian disciplines in modern times.

Environmental Disasters and Awareness in Dystopian Fiction In today's globe, ecological crises have gained prominence. A lack of ecological awareness and an elevated tendency to take nature and its domain for granted are the causes of these ecological disasters. The world that the dystopian fictions depict to us is a representation of the contemporary global issue. People become increasingly mindful of the need to preserve environment and its abundance by being shown a clear image of crises including climate change, global warming, pollution, population growth, water crises, technological breakthroughs, species extinction, and many more.

Science fiction is explored in ecological dystopian novels. Well-known dystopian novels of the modern era, including **Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***, have discussed the devastating effects of genetic engineering, infertility, pollution, and climate change, all of which have finally culminated in some sort of apocalyptic event. It takes years to clean up the air filled with chemicals, radiation, and rays, and the water is teeming with harmful compounds. In the meantime, they infiltrate your body and settle in your adipose cells. Who knows? Your own body might be as filthy as an oiled beach, a surefire way to kill offshore birds and unborn children. (Atwood.1985, p-118)

In addition to focusing on environmental awareness and deterioration, dystopian fictions alert readers to the imminent threat posed by excessive technology use. The dystopian genre's post-apocalyptic era was impacted by processes and technological advancements during the 1980s. The boundaries between humans, animals, and other living forms were being blurred by technological advancements like computers, robots, and nanotechnology. Humans also exhibit a preference for utilizing these technological innovations to improve everything and facilitate the coexistence of all people. People in society are compelled to live with technology, and since they are surrounded by it instead of interpersonal relationships, this could have more detrimental effects on the environment and people's mental and physical health. Technology will not save humanity; rather, it will be its demise, according to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, a dystopian, authoritarian society that manipulates and psychologically and scientifically engineers its people. It also looks at how far humanity can advance science without going too far in the direction of immorality. One outsider challenges the idea of an ideal society, where everyone is treated equally on the outside; this is one example of a futuristic society where technology has intervened.

Review of literature:

The French Revolution of 1789 is where dystopian writing first appeared. It exploded in reaction to utopian fiction. The author of "Utopia," Sir Thomas Moore, is credited with coining the phrase utopian. The phrase utopia, was used by Sir Thomas More which means "nowhere," More's conception of the perfect society had the unintended consequence of spreading throughout people's thoughts, and dystopian fictions emerged in response. In 1868, John Stuart Mill used the term "dystopian" for the first time. The purpose of dystopian fiction is to alert readers to the dangerous path that human society is taking. The existence of humans and other animals on Earth is threatened by the acts and inactions of people. Similar to its modeled works, such as George Orwell's 1984, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, We depicts a future socialist society that has proven to be not only imperfect but also inhuman.

New viewpoints on problematic political and social practices that are otherwise accepted as inevitable in society are offered by dystopian literature. Dystopian fiction is significant because it is instructive. These dystopian societies vividly depict the worst outcomes that humans' decisions and deeds could bring about in the near future. Emphasizing technology knowledge serves as a warning to people that may prevent the envisaged

dystopian society and its dehumanizing events from becoming a reality, as dystopian literature is rooted in ecological, global, and societal challenges.

The essential genre characteristics of the postmodern dystopian fiction, which have not yet been proven, are clearly identified and elaborated in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949), and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). The genre strategies that were incorporated into M. Atwood's novel are precisely captured by contemporary analyses of postmodern dystopian features based on the content of numerous works from the 1990s to 2000s as well as contemporary findings. At the same time, scholars concentrate on how dystopia's most prevalent elements have changed in the postmodernist era.

Its goal is to examine and elucidate the key factors that shaped English-language dystopian fiction in the 20th and 21st centuries. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003), Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008), Ally Condie's *Matched* (2010), and Samantha Shannon's *The Bone Season* (2013) are among the literary works on which these influences are discussed and illustrated. The theoretical section seeks to define dystopia as a genre, explain the term, and outline its background. The effects on the evolution of dystopia, with a particular focus on the 20th century, are also covered in this section, along with descriptions of the literature chosen for the practical section.

Climate Change And Global Warming:-

The two biggest crises the world is currently facing are climate change and global warming. Numerous ecological repercussions could accompany climate change, including harm to ecosystems and humans due to irreversible damage caused by human activity. Extreme droughts, water scarcity, flooding, major fires, polar ice cap melting, and biodiversity loss are a few of the effects of climate change. According to a research by the World Health Organization, humanitarian crises are directly caused by climate change and are becoming more frequent, larger, and more intense. 3.6 billion People live in areas that are most vulnerable to climate change, according to research.

At the start of the new era, the world was developing rapidly and getting ready for many changes while also coping with a number of ecological issues. The necessity to safeguard the natural resources and ecological system for sustainable living has emerged in the industrial age. Humans play a vital role in preserving the environment and ecology for the sake of peace and well-being. Human activity affects the environment in two ways: it can either generate or destroy nature. Themes and ecological concerns are also portrayed in dystopian literature, which also emphasizes the necessity of human action in addressing urgent ecological problems to keep them from reaching apocalyptic proportions.

Critics have long recognized the importance of **Nineteen** Eighty Four and *The Handmaid's Tale* in the dystopian canon. According to literary critic Lionel Trilling,

Nineteen Eighty Four "succeeds in fusing certain ideas and emotions and in giving them symbolic form" and has "frightening power." Additionally, he pointed out that Orwell's writing "manages to say in a way that is very nearly definitive what a great many thoughtful people believe about our times" (Trilling, 25). Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a "compelling dystopia" that "vividly imagines a future in which women's rights are entirely circumscribed," according to Elaine Showalter. Showalter went on to say that the book is a piece of "feminist protest literature" that is "both timely and timeless" due to its "profound feminist critique" of patriarchal power structures and its depiction of the "totalitarianism of the right" (Showalter. 1990 p-217). The works are perfect for a comparative study on the dystopian book as a reflection of societal fear because, as these and other critics have pointed out, they emphasize the perils of dictatorship, the manipulation of language, and the subjection of women.

Through a thorough and in-depth analysis of these two works, this thesis aims to trace the development and relevance of the dystopian novel over time and space by revealing the intricate network of literary devices and ideas that support it. In addition to shedding light on how dystopian literature reflects and critiques modern society, this study will highlight the genre's enduring relevance to the human condition through a thorough examination of how political control, gender roles, and social inequality are portrayed in these novels. This article will do this by offering a critical and insightful examination of the dystopian novel as a powerful and timeless representation of our political and cultural issues and by reaffirming its importance as a tool for social critique and introspection in the current global era of unrest and uncertainty. This article will use the theory of postmodernism as a comparative lens to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying literary techniques and themes at work in 1984 and *The Handmaid's Tale*. A useful framework for analyzing the dystopian genre's emphasis on boundary blurring and the subversion of conventional norms and expectations is provided by postmodernism, which emphasizes the fragmentation and instability of language, identity, and reality. This research will examine how postmodernism influences the stories, characters, and themes of these two works by closely examining their use of language, symbolism, and imagery.

Dystopian fiction gained recognition in the modern era with the publication of George Orwell's 1984 (1949) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). These books, along with other dystopian novels like *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by Ray Bradbury and *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) by Anthony Burgess, encapsulated the anxieties of the post-World War II era. In particular, they expressed concerns about the dehumanizing effects of authoritarianism, mass media, and technology. Consequently, dystopian fiction continued to evolve and adapt to changing social and political contexts. Feminist dystopian literature emerged as a separate subgenre in the 1980s and 1990s, with works like Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) tackling topics of gender inequality and reproductive rights.

Postmodernism is frequently employed in dystopian literature to emphasize the power relations between the state and the individual and to challenge the conventional narrative structure. Additionally, it is employed to examine identity, representation, and power—themes that are essential to dystopian fiction. In dystopian literature, postmodern strategies like fragmentation, pastiche, intertextuality, and met fiction are frequently used to evoke a sense of confusion and challenge prevailing social ideologies. As a result, postmodernism has a big influence on the structure and subject matter of dystopian fiction, enabling a more complex examination of societal concerns and the human condition.

Many people have commended George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* for its perceptive and prophetic analysis of the nature of authoritarianism and the perils of totalitarianism. The novel "establishes the basic paradigm of the dystopian novel," according to critic and literary theorist Frederic Jameson, and its effect can be observed in many later works of literature (Jameson 1984). Critics have also praised the novel's use of Meta fiction, noting that "the novel is about the making of truth and the construction of reality" according to literary scholar Linda Hutcheon. The main character Winston Smith's work in the Ministry of Truth, where he assists in rewriting history to support state propaganda, serves as an example of this. As Orwell writes,

The novel's fragmentation and non-linear narrative structures add to the sense of confusion and disorientation that reflects what it's like to live under a totalitarian government. In order to produce a more intricate and multi-layered critique of power and authority, Orwell also uses intertextuality, referencing literature and history.

A purposeful reversal of the Enlightenment notion that knowledge is power, the phrase "Ignorance is Strength" serves as an example. *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* postmodern components enable a more complex and nuanced critique of a dystopian society, underscoring Orwell's work's continued relevance in the postmodern age. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a seminal work of dystopian fiction that incorporates several postmodern elements to critique patriarchal power structures and societal norms.

"There is more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it."

(Atwood.1985, p-24)

In order to create a sense of confusion that is similar to the protagonist's experience of living under an oppressive regime, the book employs a fragmented narrative structure that alternates between the past and present. According to critic Joseph Conte, the novel's "postmodern" style highlights the challenges of discovering the truth in a totalitarian state (Conte 1994). By referencing other literary works and historical occurrences, including the Bible and the Salem witch trials, the book also employs intertextuality to produce a more complex and multi-layered critique of oppression and power. "We live in a world where there are a lot of texts, and the relationship between those texts is a very interesting one," Atwood

said in reference to the importance of intertextuality in her writing (Atwood, 1985 p-1991). By using a first-person female narrator who defies the patriarchal conventions of her society, *The Handmaid's Tale* also challenges conventional narrative structures. The novel's dystopian features include the severe repression of individualism and free thought, as well as the cruel treatment of women. "The control of women and babies has been a feature of every repressive regime on the planet," said Atwood. (Atwood, 1985 p-2017)

The world depicted in *Brave New World* initially appears to be ideal. Humanity is technologically sophisticated, carefree, and healthy. A closer examination reveals the dystopia that lies beyond this delusion. Instead of frightening its subjects, it portrays a totalitarian dictatorship that makes them adore their enslavement. Strict management is necessary to keep society stable. The government has eradicated family life and encourages promiscuous sex. Religion and God have been removed from people's lives by the world controllers, who have replaced them with worship of technology. The creator of the Ford Motor Company, Henry T. Ford, is the deity of this apocalyptic society. The society is divided in categories Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon and savages. People are psychologically conditioned to fit into their social roles.

"Explore a society where happiness is mandatory, stability is paramount, and individuality is obsolete, achieved through conditioning and the drug soma."

(Huxley, 1994, p- 43)

The main characters of the novel are John (Savage), Lenina Crowne (Beta), Bernard Marx (Alpha) and The Controller Mustapha Mond (Alpha). Since there are no families to bring up children, Hatcheries and Conditioning Centers create and raise the children. This mass production creates social stability but individuality is lost. Everybody in this world is happy because they have SOMA. It is a narcotic used to create pleasant sensations without any side effects. Death is a good thing as the bodies can be reused:

"The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They are well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers and fathers; they've got no wives or children or lovers they feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help as they ought to behave."

(Huxley 1994, 200)

The events of **Never Let Me Go** take place in Hailsham, an English boarding school in the late 20th century, where the students are clones that have been raised specifically to harvest their organs. The rules of Hailsham are different. Making art and dealing with typical teenage issues are the main focuses of life at Hailsham. Because they are viewed as less than human, its students are not considered members of society. The three main characters of the book—Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy—discover that they are clones who were raised to donate their organs. Kathy's life at Hailsham, her graduation from the Cottages, and her life as a carer make up the three sections of the novel. These clones were made to support the 'normal'

as it is known. When they reach a certain age the middle age', the clones sacrifice their organs. One guardian does spell it out for them (and the readers) eventually:

"None of you will go to America; none of you will be film stars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day. Your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you are created to do. "

(Ishiguro 2005,80)

To sum up, via the lens of postmodernism, George Orwell's 1984, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* provide insightful criticisms of dystopian civilizations. While *The Handmaid's Tale* examines the control of women's bodies and the erasing of their identities, *Nineteen Eighty Four* deals with the manipulation and control of language and history. A "negative utopia" is depicted in **Aldous Huxley's Brave New World**, which explores the notion that the government may make the world so ideal and controlled that it really has the opposite effect. In addition to being about cloning, the children in **Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go** were raised in a dystopian society where they were taught that they were unique and required protection from the "truth." The postmodern strategies employed in these pieces serve to emphasize their critiques of power; for example, *The Handmaid's Tale* uses intertextuality to convey a complex story, while 1984 uses fragmentation to convey confusion. In the end, these books are still pertinent in the postmodern era, where issues of power, history, and linguistic control persist. Their thoughts on apocalyptic visions and societal concern are still relevant today.

One of the greatest human inventions, technology has changed people's lives in numerous ways and has an impact on both human civilization and the ecological balance of the planet. Technology has a significant impact on the environment that can be both beneficial and detrimental. One of the main elements of dystopian fiction is technology, which complicates people's lives in various ways. Ecological resources are extremely important, and every technology has the potential to negatively impact both the ecological system and human lives. Overuse of technology could cause a number of problems for humanity that may never be resolved. Some of the problems the world is currently dealing with as a result of technological advancements include the concept of sustainability, which holds that we must meet our present demands without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In dystopian fiction, the most common theme is genetic engineering and biotechnology. Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, contains references to the detrimental ecological effects of technology. These effects are said to have existed in the pre-Gilead society, where women used birth control devices and power plants, as well as sex technologies. Atomic power plants are mentioned, and as a result of the high levels of radiation and pollution, Gilead's society began to experience infertility issues, which could ultimately lead to the end of human civilization.

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